

# Papa

*by* Noah Friedman

Fridays always said it was time for golf,  
which left me wide, wide like the space between your teeth,  
on the stoop til you'd let me share your palm with your nine iron.

I was a utility. Your gap toothed divot tool or a headcover that had  
your smile.

Sometimes you'd gawk back, like I was the hound of heaven that you  
could not escape as I watched the shrapnel bite your heel with each  
gimpy, gimp swing.

You carried Livorno with every limp.

I carried BBs, aiming my muzzled-finger through the dogleg on hole  
8,  
as you surrendered your plaster cast white Titleist One to flight with  
a clack.

And as each shot hobbled down the green Naugahyde corridor (you  
rarely sliced),

I beamed, pink-lipped and sugar-brained, to the soles of your cleats,  
to comb over the vaulted earth; "The truest act of loving kindness,"  
they'd say

"In a democracy, no word is more abused than the word 'gentleman,'  
nor is it more maligned at times, pooh-poohed, or less understood."

You showed me each step as if nobility was a par six at Bataan,

stumbling by mile number four, you turn as hard as Krupps steel,  
"Leave it, leave it," like Garbo in Grand Hotel,  
you mark a 99 on the scorecard and fold away another day of infamy.

